Mission Statement:

The University of Kansas Audio-Reader Network exists to provide print-disabled Kansans with access to the printed word and other information via electronic media and other technologies.

Audio-Reader’s services are provided to enable print-disabled Kansans the opportunity to live their lives with the greatest possible personal independence.
Welcome! We are pleased that you have chosen to volunteer your time and talents at the Kansas Audio-Reader Network. Audio-Reader’s success depends on the hard work, dedication and talent of our volunteers.

Please read this guide carefully and completely, especially if you are new to Audio-Reader. This handbook will help you understand your role at Audio-Reader, guide you through the different volunteer assignments and help you with broadcasting techniques. We hope it will make you more confident as an Audio-Reader volunteer, and enhance your experience with us.
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What is Audio-Reader?

Audio-Reader is a closed circuit radio station serving the blind and print-disabled of Kansas and western Missouri. This includes people not only with visual disabilities, but other conditions that prevent them from reading normal printed materials. We broadcast 24-hours a day, 7 days a week over sub-carriers of Kansas Public Radio stations. Our listeners receive this signal free of charge via a special radio given to them when they become subscribers to the Audio-Reader service. We can also be heard on the SAP channel of Smoky Hills Public Television stations.

In addition to the radio, Audio-Reader has a dial-in newspaper service called Lions Telephone Reader. Telephone Reader allows listeners to hear recordings of the Kansas City Star, Topeka Capital-Journal and other publications on-demand. Listeners receive a local phone number or toll-free number to access these recordings.

Audio-Reader also provides special request recordings, live audio description of theatre performances in the Lawrence, Kansas City and Topeka areas and a sensory garden designed to appeal to the visually impaired. You’ll find job descriptions for the volunteers who give their time to each of these services later in the handbook.

The History of Audio-Reader

Audio-Reader’s rich history began several decades ago with Lawrence philanthropist Petey Cerf. With a goal of making printed materials available to the visually impaired, Petey decided to support a radio reading service in Lawrence, similar to one in Minnesota. She approached the University of Kansas for funding. And on October 11, 1971, Audio-Reader became the second reading service of its kind to hit the airwaves.

We began with just 80 hours of programming each week and about 250 listeners. In 1985 we started broadcasting 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Audio-Reader now serves about 6,000 listeners. In addition, we’ve expanded our services to offer a dial-in newspaper service, special request
recordings, live audio description of theatre performances and a sensory garden.

Audio-Reader didn’t always broadcast from the Baehr house on KU’s campus. We started in 450 square feet of space in the Sudler House, just south of our current location. In 1976, we moved into a mobile home and a larger space in Sudler. In 1987, renovations began on the Phi Kappa Tau fraternity house, which had been used for storage throughout the 1970’s and 80’s. Audio-Reader started broadcasting from its new and improved home in 1988. The Baehr Audio-Reader Center is named for two of its major donors: Dolpha and Louis Baehr. Dolpha was an Audio-Reader listener.

A new addition for Kansas Public Radio, which carries Audio-Reader on its sub-carrier, was completed in September 2003.

Who Are Audio-Reader’s Listeners?

Anyone who is unable to read normal printed materials qualifies to become an Audio-Reader listener. Subscribers fill out a short application form for the services they’re interested in. A medical professional certifies their disability.

Our listeners range in age from 10 to over 100 years old. While most are totally blind, many others have less severe visual impairments like macular degeneration or are disabled by disease, quadriplegia or other conditions, such as Dyslexia, that prevent them from being able to read printed text. We’ve even had a listener with an allergy to printer’s ink.
Our radio listeners are the largest group. Most range in age from 60 to 90. Many suffer from Macular Degeneration, an age-related eye disorder. They are new to the blind community, do not read Braille and may be uncomfortable with the technology advances that benefit younger members of the community. These listeners like the simplicity of the Audio-Reader radio, which has one knob on the front to turn it on and off and adjust the volume.

Every other month, radio service listeners receive a program guide in either large print or Braille. This guide lists a daily schedule of programs and readers. Feel free to ask for an Audio-Reader Program Guide any time to familiarize yourself with the material we provide.

Lions Telephone Reader listeners tend to be younger, more comfortable with using technology and prefer access to a wide range of unabridged information at their fingertips. Telephone Reader listeners often use Braille and have other “enabling technology” in the home. They also have very specific ideas of what material they want to hear. There is overlap between the two groups. Telephone Reader listeners are equipped with a menu telling them where to find each publication and its various sections.

Listeners can also access Audio-Reader recordings via the internet. Some of these listeners live as far away as California, New York, even the United Kingdom, Japan and South Africa.

In addition, any listener is encouraged to send in special request materials. These can include anything from newspapers and magazines to books, instruction manuals or newsletters. Many of our listeners send in requests regularly.

Audio-Reader’s Volunteers

Nearly 300 volunteers provide the backbone for the Kansas Audio-Reader Network. Our youngest started reading at age 11, our oldest is more than 90 years old. They include teachers, doctors,
lawyers, business owners, ministers, homemakers, retirees, students and more. We have volunteers who live in Lawrence, Kansas City, Topeka, even Paola, Ottawa, Tonganoxie, Tecumseh and Wamego. Some read from home, but most come to the Audio-Reader studios. We also have a contingent of volunteers in Pittsburg, Kansas who read regional newspapers from studios at KRPS. Most Audio-Reader volunteers have no professional broadcasting experience, but each must pass a difficult audition to become a reader. Some volunteer their time once a week, others several times a week or even every day. Regardless of their time commitment, their dedication to helping Audio-Reader bring the printed word to life for the blind and print-disabled of Kansas and western Missouri is unbeatable.

Our Facilities

We want you to feel at home as an Audio-Reader volunteer. Each volunteer will have an orientation session, including a tour of Audio-Reader and Kansas Public Radio facilities. Here are some of the things you need to know as an Audio-Reader volunteer.

Parking:

Each Audio-Reader volunteer will be issued a window decal that allows them to park anywhere in the lot immediately outside Audio-Reader. Please place this decal in the rear window of your vehicle. Because Audio-Reader’s parking lot is a “Red Zone,” anyone without this decal or a valid permit from the KU Parking Department can be ticketed. Please avoid parking in the fire lane (anywhere along the driveway leading to Audio-Reader) as this will result in a ticket. If you arrive and there is no place to park, please alert a staff member so we can move our own vehicles to another lot.

Restrooms:

There are unisex restrooms on the first floor to the west of the stairs, and on the second floor near the banister.
Beverages:

There is a water cooler on the first floor outside the on-air studio and a drinking fountain upstairs across from the Roundtable Room. You will also find coffee in the living room downstairs and in the volunteer area upstairs. There is a pop machine located in the kitchen.

Other Supplies:

You will find cough drops in the Roundtables and in the volunteer area upstairs. There will be Kleenex in each studio as well. Cups for coffee and water are located near the coffee pot or drinking fountain. If you discover anything in short supply, please let a staff member know.

In addition, there are Dictionaries in the downstairs Roundtable and outside the Coordinator of Volunteers’ office. You’ll also find Associated Press and regional pronunciation guides there and in the Roundtables. You can go to the Wolfner Library’s “You Say It How?” website at www.sos.mo.gov/wolfner/SayHow/ for audio pronunciations of the names of lesser known and contemporary public figures. Merriam Webster’s online dictionary, www.m-w.com, also provides audio pronunciations.

Smoking:

Audio-Reader is a smoke-free facility.

Housekeeping:

When you leave your studio, please be courteous and remove any food, papers, wrappers, cups or other trash. There are trash cans in each studio and recycling bins in the Roundtables and volunteer area for your use.

Scheduling Studio Time

Audio-Reader has 7 recording studios available, plus a Telephone Reader headset available in the upstairs Roundtable room most mornings. When you begin your volunteer assignment, you will schedule a day and time for
recording. If you need to add, change or delete time from the recording schedule, please contact the Coordinator of Volunteers at 864-4604. You can check for available times online at www.reader.ku.edu/studios before calling.

If you are unable to schedule a consistent recording time, we ask that you contact the Coordinator of Volunteers on a weekly basis to schedule your time for that week. Priority will be given to readers with scheduled time. If you come without scheduling, please check with the Coordinator of Volunteers or another staff member to be sure open studios have not been reserved by another volunteer.

Audio-Reader Absence Policy

Our listeners rely heavily on you to bring them the news and information from their communities, the nation and the world. For many, your recording will be the one bright spot in their day.

Audio-Reader is also a unique volunteer experience, in that you are solely responsible for getting your assignment read. At least one of our listeners is waiting for you specifically to complete that assignment. That said, it is imperative to let an Audio-Reader staff member know as far in advance as possible when you are unable to complete your assignment. In addition, we encourage you to make up missed time by filling in as a substitute prior to your departure or upon your return.

The best people to contact about an absence are Jennifer Nigro, Coordinator of Volunteers, at 864-4604 or jnigro@ku.edu, and George McCoy, Telephone Reader Supervisor, at 864-4612 or gmccoy@ku.edu. However, if either Jennifer or George are unavailable, it is wise to follow up with another staff member. The sooner you let us know you will be away, the better chance we have of finding someone to substitute for you. This keeps both us and our listeners happy!

If you fail to call repeatedly before an absence, there will be consequences. The first no-call, no-show in a six-month period will result in a verbal warning. The second will lead to a written warning, and you will be placed on probation for the remainder of that six-month period. If you fail to make
us aware of an absence three times in a six-month period, we will be forced to remove you from your weekly reading assignment and place you on a sub list. If, after a six-month period there are no other attendance issues and you feel you are able to re-commit to a weekly assignment, you may be allowed to return on a probationary basis.

This policy sounds strict, and it is. We want you to understand how much our listeners rely on you. We also want to make it clear that as long as you communicate with us, we won’t have to put this policy into effect.

Vacations and Leaves of Absence

From time to time, a volunteer may need to miss several weeks in a row. This can be for a variety of reasons, including a medical condition, family emergency, changes in job or school-related activities or travel. If you determine you need to take a leave of absence, please notify the Coordinator of Volunteers as soon as possible. If you can, please let us know approximately how long you will be away. This will determine whether we use a substitute reader for your broadcast or assign a new reader to it.

Holidays

Audio-Reader is open on all holidays from 7:30 a.m. to Noon. If you record a program that cannot be recorded ahead of time, you will need to come in during those hours or arrange with the Coordinator of Volunteers for a substitute. TELEPHONE READERS, BREAKFAST TABLE TIMES READERS AND OTHERS WHO RECORD SAME-DAY BROADCASTS ARE EXPECTED TO READ UNLESS THEY HAVE MADE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEERS. Because there is less time available for volunteers to complete their assignments, we ask book readers and anyone else who can record ahead to make up their time on another day. This ensures readers who have broadcasts airing on the holiday can get a studio when they need it. If you are willing to read as a substitute on holidays, please let the Coordinator of Volunteers know.
What Will I Read?

Reading assignments are made based on several factors. When making an assignment, the Coordinator of Volunteers will consider the needs of the program along with the reader’s abilities, schedule and interests. You may not get your dream assignment right off the bat. But, after an initial period of 6 months (barring any circumstances that might lead to an earlier switch), you can let the Coordinator of Volunteers know if you’d like to try something new. Keep in mind, though, we may not be able to change your assignment until something different opens up and we get someone else to read your old one.

Time Commitment

Because of the time involved in auditioning, orienting and training new volunteers, as well as consistency for our listeners, we ask that you commit to reading to Audio-Reader for a minimum period of 6 months. Most reading assignments are done once a week and take approximately two hours to complete.

Job Descriptions

Radio Reading

Responsibilities:

1. Accept a weekly volunteer assignment of approximately two hours in length.
2. Complete your assigned program within a half-hour of its air time, or within a half-hour of closing time the day of or before its air time.
3. Read all materials as they are written, without censoring or editorializing.
4. Select reading materials with the listener in mind; do not gravitate toward your own opinions and viewpoints.
5. Keep up with names and topics in the news. If you are unsure of a pronunciation, look it up or ask a staff member.
6. Be courteous of others—help keep our recording studios clean by throwing away trash, recycling used reading materials and returning other supplies to their appropriate places.

Using the Digital Recording System

1. Gather your reading materials, including your opening/closing card and your program information sheet (blue sheet for book readers, green for newspapers and periodicals.) Find an empty studio.
2. Seat yourself in front of the microphone with your mouth about a hand’s length away from the mic.
3. If your computer screen is black, move the mouse to bring up the recording screen.
4. The recording screen will have a multi-colored box at the top, as well as boxes indicating functions for things such as load, play, record, etc.
5. Start by pressing the LOAD key on the keypad. This will generate a code number in the Audio Status File area and highlight the record button. Write the code number on your recording sheet.
6. Under the code area, you will see “Current Position,” “Time Left” and “Max Time.” When you start recording, the Current Position time will start counting up. That’s the number you want to watch.
7. To start recording, press the red RECORD key. Read your opening statement, then continue with your reading material until you have finished your broadcast.
8. If you need to take a break to sneeze, get a drink or rearrange your materials, just press the yellow PAUSE button. This stops the recording process until you press PAUSE again.
9. When you have completed your reading, press the STOP button. Write down your final time on your recording sheet.
10. Press SAVE. Wait for the save box to disappear.
11. Press DONE.
12. Turn your blue or green sheet into the blue letter bin on the file cabinet in the Coordinator of Volunteers’ office.

To correct Mistakes:
1. Press the yellow PAUSE button to stop the recording process.
2. Hit LAST 5 to go back 5 seconds. Then hit the green PLAY button to play that portion of your broadcast.
3. If you need to correct something within those last 5 seconds, hit **LAST 5** then hit **PAUSE** just before your mistake. Then hit **RECORD** and continue reading.

4. If your mistake is more than 5 seconds back, hit **LAST 5** to go back the first 5 seconds, then **BACK 5** as many times as necessary to get to your mistake. Press **PLAY** to listen, then **PAUSE** just before your mistake. Press **RECORD** to continue reading.

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**Broadcast Formats**

**Books and Other Pre-Recorded Publications:**

Each broadcast has basically the same format. You will begin by reading an opening statement which introduces you, the publication you are reading and its date. Once you have recorded your opening statement, you will begin reading from the publication. When you have come close to the time allowed (see your intro card for that information), you will record your closing statement.

When recording a book, this format is slightly different. After reading your opening statement, you will do one of two things. If it is your first broadcast, you will record the book jacket information before beginning the book. You do not need to read copyright, table of contents, or dedication.

On subsequent broadcasts, you will write a short synopsis of what you just read and record that after your opening statement. You can write your synopsis in a notepad provided by Audio-Reader. The summary establishes the context from where your reading will continue and/or highlight any important events that transpired in the previous broadcast.

When book reading, it is helpful to keep track of where each broadcast begins and ends. Also, keep your summaries until the entire book is complete, just in case a broadcast gets lost or a studio has technical difficulties.

On the last broadcast of your book, write **END** or **CONCLUSION** by the broadcast number on your blue sheet. This broadcast should run between 53
and 59 minutes. But, if your time is less than that, we ask that you “fill out” the rest of the broadcast by reading material related to the book: author interviews, book reviews, related material or part of another book by the same author. The internet can be a great source, but if you have trouble, as the Coordinator of Volunteers or Program Manager for help.

If in the course of your reading you run across any offensive material, DO NOT CENSOR IT. Instead, write DISCLAIMER at the top of your blue sheet so we can add a disclaimer before it airs. Offensive material can include excessive profanity or explicit sexual scenes or graphic violence. If in doubt, ask.

**Live Broadcasts:**

1. Arrive on time! It’s best to arrive at least 15-20 minutes before air time. You MUST be in place no less than 5 minutes before your broadcast begins.
2. Prepare your material. A staff member will cut the edges of your newspaper for you, and continuation pages placed directly behind the first part of the article.
3. Get your water or coffee before you go on the air and set it in a safe place. If your throat becomes dry during a broadcast, turn away from the microphone when you take a drink.
4. Arrange your newspaper on the table and position your microphone correctly. Wear headphones when available.
5. Never editorialize! You may make appropriate transitional remarks, but do not comment or use the tone of your voice to indicate your personal views.
6. Make your reading style appropriate to the material, but don’t be overly dramatic.
7. When reading obituaries, give the name of the deceased, their age, city or town and the date of their death. If they passed away in another locale, you may list a local connection. Save your obituaries so listeners can call for more information.
8. Be sure to identify editorials.
9. Do not spend more than 5 minutes on a single article. Let the listener know there is more to the story, but you are moving on.
10. Avoid rustling the pages of the newspaper.
11. If you read with a partner, you may quietly leave the room to get a drink or use the restroom during a broadcast.
12. Both microphones are always on, so leave the room if you need to cough or sneeze. If you have a sudden coughing fit or lose your voice while reading your partner will take over until you recover.
13. Avoid repeating articles your partner has read.
14. Repeat the title and author of each article when you introduce each article and when you finish it.

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**Telephone Reader**

**Responsibilities:**

1. Complete a weekly reading assignment of about an hour-and-a-half each week. This can be done at the Audio-Reader studios or from home.
2. Complete recordings by 10 a.m. for *Kansas City Star* recordings or Noon for *Topeka Capital-Journal* recordings on your assigned day. Other publications, such as newsletters, *TV Guide, Dos Mundos, Parade, USA Weekend and Star Magazine* have more flexible deadlines.

**Recording Guidelines:**

1. Be sure to read your Category Sheet (the info sheet on the section you are reading) thoroughly. This sheet will tell you where to begin, what to read and what not to read.
2. Before recording each article, write the corresponding number next to each headline. Avoid pre-numbering each article.
3. Turn on the Telephone Reader system by pressing the “On/Off” button.
4. Once in the system, follow the verbal prompts and press the number on your keypad to select the publication you wish to record. The prompt will then tell you to “press any key” to begin the record process.
5. Enter the category number for the article you want to record (you’ll find this on your Category Sheet.) The prompt will repeat the number back to you. If it’s correct, you can press 1 and begin recording immediately after the tone. **IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE SURE YOU ARE RECORDING IN THE RIGHT CATEGORY!**

6. On your first article, introduce yourself, the publication you are reading and the date.

7. When recording, read the headline first, then the byline and dateline.

8. When you want to take a break, you can press any key to pause the recording. To resume recording, press 4 and start reading after the tone. If the system disconnects during your break, you will need to turn it off and ring in again. Follow the verbal cues to return to the article you want to record.

9. To re-record a sentence, press any key to break from the record mode. Press 2 to back up 10 seconds. If you need to go back further, you can press 2 to keep going back in 10 second increments. To listen, press 3. Press any key to end the playback, and 4 to resume recording.

10. When you finish recording your first article, press any key to break from the record mode. Press 7 to move to the next consecutive article number, or 6 to enter the number yourself.

11. To exit the system when you’re done, press the pound sign or hang up by pressing the “On/Off” button.

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**Special Requests**

*Requirements:*

1. Schedule a weekly recording session of about 1 ½ to 2 hours in length. Many times you can complete an entire newspaper in this amount of time.

2. Check the Special Request rack for available material. Unless you’ve been assigned to a specific special request by the Assistant Coordinator of Volunteers, choose your material in the following order:
   1) Items marked “Priority.”
   2) Items that have already been started by another reader.
   3) Dated material (newspapers, etc.—read the oldest newspaper first).
4) All other items.
3. Each envelope should contain the material to be recorded, one or more cassette tapes and the open/close statements script. You can find additional tapes on the Assistant Coordinator of Volunteers’ desk.
4. If you are continuing a project that another reader has started, use the project envelope cover to see where in the material you should begin reading and on which side of which tape you should start on.
5. Check the envelope for any special instructions and cross out anything that is not to be read. If there are no special instructions, read everything except advertisements, public notices and other such items.
6. When you finish, indicate where you left off on the recording sheet. Place everything back in the envelope. If the project is complete, put it on the Assistant Coordinator of Volunteers’ desk. If it is incomplete, put it back in the proper slot in the rack.

Recording:

1. Load the tape into the cassette machine.
2. Press the pause button down.
3. Press the play and record buttons down at the same time.
4. Press the pause button again to begin recording. If you are starting at the beginning of a tape (either side) allow 10 seconds or so to let the leader run out.
5. Start with the appropriate opening statement from the card. Speak directly into the studio microphone, not the tape recorder microphone.
6. Press the pause button when you need to take a break or turn a page.
7. To edit a mistake, press stop and rewind the tape to the beginning of the sentence where you made the mistake. Repeat steps 2-4 and re-record the entire sentence.
8. Be sure to record the proper closing statement for each side before the cassette runs out. Remember, there is 10 seconds of non-recordable pad at the end of each tape!

Audio Description

Audio Describers use colorful, succinct language to describe theatre to the visually impaired. This is done live. Description covers everything from
sets and costumes to setting the scene and action on stage. However, it is the describer’s job to avoid speaking when the actors are speaking or singing.

Requirements:

1. Pass an Audio Description audition. Sessions will be held each year. Contact the Coordinator of Volunteers if you are interested.
2. Once you pass your audition, you will be required to go through an 8 hour training session.
3. Describers will attend two performances in most cases. The first is to preview the show. Although you may take notes, the pace is so fast during an actual description you won’t have much time to refer to them. When you preview, you are looking for details pertinent to the viewer. Time is often limited, so you have to choose what are the most important things to describe.
4. Description is usually done in pairs, but not always. One describer reads the program notes and layout of the theatre before the show and intermission. The other does the description during the show. Both partners should be prepared in case the other has to cancel at the last minute or loses their voice!
5. Once a description is complete, describers are responsible for gathering up all of the audio description headsets and other equipment and returning them to Audio-Reader.

Sensory Garden

The Sensory Garden is designed to appeal to all of the human senses so the visually impaired can experience the imagination and spirit of plant life through textures, fragrances and sounds. Some items may not be in an optimum location for a visual experience, but they afford touch and sound experiences for many people.
Responsibilities:

1. When you arrive at Audio-Reader, if the building is open, please sign your name in the volunteer notebook just inside the front door. You can also sign the volunteer log in the garden storage bin on the back patio. The combination for the lock is 28-13-1.

2. Check the garden bulletin board for any special notes or updates for garden volunteers.

3. Perform your assigned watering or maintenance task.

4. If it is too wet and you don’t need to water, please consider performing other duties on the checklist on the garden bulletin board.

5. Sprinklers can be turned on and off by operating two valves just inside the archway to the garden. Please do not move the hoses in the garden, as they are connected to these valves.

6. Watering duration will depend on the season and weather. Use your judgment. If the soil appears moist, adding water will do more damage than good. But dry, loose soil needs a drink.

7. The hanging baskets in the gazebo can be watered with watering cans stored in the front closet inside the building, in the outside storage bin or with the plastic jugs outside.

8. There are garden tools in the storage bin behind the building on the patio. Please return all tools when you are done.

9. Plants should not be moved.

10. Before you leave, please record the details of your volunteer work on the garden log located in the storage bin outside. This helps us from duplicating tasks!

11. If you have an urgent concern or question, please leave a note to Diana on the receptionist desk inside, or contact her via phone or e-mail during the week.

12. Please sign out in the volunteer notebook before you leave.
For Your Ears Only

For Your Ears Only is Audio-Reader’s annual special event fundraiser. Throughout the year, we collect gently used audio products from people in the community. The donations range from CD’s and videos to speakers, turntables and books. We need volunteers to sort these donations, help with pricing and pitch in with set-up, cashiering and baking during the sale. Any extra time you can give before and during the sale is very much appreciated.

Reading Techniques

When you read, you want to read smoothly, clearly and with expression. Here are some tips to help you along the way.

Suggested Remedies for Vocal Abandonment
Or
What to Do When Your Voice Gives Out
Adapted from tips by Marie Asner

As we consider reading techniques and the voice in general, it may be helpful to share a few tips regarding vocal abandonment, and how to avoid it. These techniques have been used by vocalists (for singing) and have validity for broadcasters as well.
1. Always have a glass of some kind of liquid available. Room temperature water is best. Sip slowly—large gulps will force air down your throat, resulting in an untimely burp. Avoid carbonated beverages before and during a broadcast.

2. If your body chemistry tends to be “acidy,” try warm tea with a teaspoon of honey in it. If your body chemistry is average, try warm tea with a teaspoon of lemon juice. The warmth of the liquid will tend to have a relaxing effect on throat structures.

3. Before reading, practice by watching yourself in a mirror as you read for several minutes. Does our head gradually go farther and farther back? If you develop this habit, you tighten neck muscles which will result in a higher tone, voice fatigue, and after a period of time, a stiff neck. Try to keep your head level as you read. Check your microphone to make sure that it is at a comfortable level for you.

4. Avoid milk or cheese products for several hours before you read. In many individuals, this produces phlegm (or “postnasal drip”) and a full, uncomfortable feeling in the throat. Highly spiced foods can do the same thing.

5. If you really have problems with a “dry throat,” it may be due to low humidity or over-doing decongestants. If you must take some form of sinus medication, do it after broadcasting. Also, get a small spray bottle from your pharmacy and keep it filled with room temperature water. (Those comic films showing opera singers running back and forth spraying their throats really do have some validity!)

6. Relax your neck and upper shoulder muscles before broadcasting. Gently rotate the neck in a circle, sitting up straight. Shrug the shoulders slowly, literally feeling every muscle move. Some people find it beneficial to gently massage the sides of the neck with fingertips to loosen taut muscles.

7. Breathe deeply and from the diaphragm before broadcasting. This can be done with number 6 as a routine.

8. As a last reminder, avoid bending the head too far forward and/or downward since this can effectively cut down your air supply and “shut off” your voice. Watch yourself in a mirror. If you can’t see yourself, your head is too low. Try to strike a happy medium.

9. Make sure that the temperature is comfortable in your recording studio. If you feel much too hot or too cold, this can take its toll on your voice and your energy level.
10. Be sure to take a break during your broadcast if possible to take a drink, stretch or get a breath of fresh air if your voice is feeling fatigued.

*How to Speak the Written Word*
(excerpted from *How to Speak the Written Word* by Nedra Newkirk Lamar; published by Fleming H. Revell Co., copyright 1934, 1939, 1945.)

The ability to read intelligently and intelligibly is both a science and an art. Good oral readers are always applying certain principles, whether consciously or unconsciously…

Unless a violinist is one of the rare and phenomenally gifted geniuses, he must have learned his notes, he must have perfected his technique and he must have applied his knowledge and skill to a certain sonata before being able to play it well.

In the same way, a reader, to be successful and pleasing, should first of all have a thorough understanding of the selection he is to read. If he loves it and enjoys it, this is still better. But above all, he must understand it. Surely no one will deny that this is the first essential. But the second requirement is equally important: the knowledge of how to express the meaning that he may see ever so clearly. And that involves a knowledge of where to pause and where not to pause, what to emphasize and what to subdue, and other points which will be discussed in this book…

The long suffering listeners, either over the radio or in audiences, are so accustomed to hearing mechanical, meaningless reading that they revise mentally while they listen. But this should not be the case. The reader’s function, the news broadcaster’s function, is to give the sense, not to make the listeners have to dig it out for themselves. In the rare instances where the reader does the necessary reasoning and the consequent phrasing and emphasizing, his listeners are appreciative…

Good, plain, honest mistakes are easier to listen to and forgive than artificial, mannered reading.
The greatest fault and the most prevalent among oral readers is unnaturalness, in the form of stilted, dramatic, oratorical or old fashioned elocutionary affectations…

**What to Emphasize**

Meaningful emphasis and natural phrasing are the two qualities employed by radio speakers who read from a prepared script but sound as if they are ad libbing or speaking the words just as they come to thought. Either consciously or unconsciously they employ certain principles of emphasis and phrasing.

**Simple Contrast**

The whole secret of meaningful, and therefore natural, emphasis lies in stressing the word that carries the through, the meaning word. To put it more fully: emphasize the new idea or the contrast; subdue the old idea.

As Lewis Carrol said, “My rule for knowing which word to lean on is the word that tells you something new, something that is different from what you expected.”

Any word you can leave out without changing the meaning you need not and should not stress.

**Examples of Proper Word Emphasis**

Read these sentences aloud: “Florence is my sister. I love Florence.” You probably stressed the first Florence and sister. But surely you didn’t stress the second Florence, because it is now an old idea. Instead, if you read it naturally, you subdued the second Florence and stressed love, which is the new idea. The second Florence is so obvious that the more natural thing to say would be “Florence is my sister. I love her.”

Frequently the ‘new idea’ is more than just a new idea: it is a definite contrast. “Honesty is the best policy: dishonesty, therefore, should be avoided.” Here, dishonest would naturally receive the greatest stress of any
word in the sentence, because it is not only a new idea but a pointed contrast to honesty.

Readers are more likely to emphasize too many words than too few…. Stressing all the words in a sentence is like underscoring all the words in a letter: when you have done so you might as well not have stressed or underscored any of them. You are back on a level of no emphasis at all.

**First time Ness**

There is one outstanding characteristic of the actor who reads lines naturally or the announcer who reads a radio script as if he were just talking. This is what has been called ‘first time ness.’ This means the quality of sounding as if you were saying the words for the first time, as if neither you nor anyone else had even thought them before.

**Parenthetical Expressions**

Most people understand that a parenthetical expression should be read in a much lower tone of voice than the rest of the sentence. This is true whether the parenthetical expression is set off by parenthesis, by dashes or by commas.

For example:
- “He was, I should say, about sixteen years old.”
- “You have come to be-- if I may say so-- no longer necessary to our group.”
- “We have found her to be (and I’m now quoting your favorite author) unlearned in the world’s false subtleties.”

The words set off by commas in the first sentence, by dashes in the second and by parenthesis in the third, are all parenthetical expressions and should be read in a lower tone of voice or ‘thrown away’ as actors say.

**Phrasing**

A phrase is a group of related words that conveys a thought. Almost every sentence contains one phrase or more, and after some of these the reader should pause.
A PHRASE IS A GROUP OF RELATED WORDS THAT CONVEYS A THOUGHT.

A PAUSE IS A SHORT PERIOD OF SILENCE THAT FOLLOWS A SPOKEN WORD OR PHRASE.

A phrase serves three purposes. Its first and most obvious function is to give the reader an opportunity to breathe. In conversation we breathe comfortably and frequently without even thinking about it, because we breathe at the natural phrasing places, that is, at the ends of ideas. But sometimes an unpracticed reader fails to breathe at the natural place and then finds himself having to stop for breath at a most inappropriate point.

The second function of the phrase is to give the reader an opportunity to look ahead to see what he is to read next. During the pause following the first phrase he is not only taking a new breath, if he needs to, but also quickly scanning the sentence to the end of the next small thought. Then he reads that thought aloud, then pauses to look ahead through the next phrase, and then reads it in turn…. In a way, pauses are almost as important as the words…

The first two functions of the phrase or the pause are for the benefit of the reader; the third is for the audience’s benefit: the audience hears the reader, or grasps his meaning, during his ‘flashes of silence’ instead of while he is speaking… Not only does the pause help to bring out the meaning; a well placed pause sometimes heightens the effect of a reading as nothing else could.

Don’t phrase (just) because of punctuation. You don’t look to the punctuation for your phrasing; you look to the punctuation for meaning; then you look to the meaning for the phrasing.

Quotations

Don’t let anyone persuade you that you are supposed to stop and wait before and after a quotation. You don’t have to signal to your hearers that a quotation is coming or has just ended. When reading you should be thinking about the sense, not about the punctuation, as you do not think in terms of punctuation marks when you are just talking.
(Slight pauses and changes in your intonation are sometimes helpful and effective when reading quotations.

**Italics**

As a general rule, italicizing a word indicates that the idea it carries is important; therefore, the word should be emphasized appropriately in your reading.

(In regard to good oral reading: ) Always let common sense and good taste be your final test.

**Studio Techniques**

Before you begin recording or go on the air for a live broadcast, please remove any jewelry, such as loose bracelets or beeping watches, which could produce distracting noises during your broadcast. Turn off cell phones.

Be sure to arrange your book, magazine or newspaper so that it is accessible and easy to handle. If possible, hold your reading material slightly raised in front of you. (If you are recording, you may wish to use the “book butler” provided in each studio.) At this angle, your head will be tilted enough to allow your throat muscles to relax. This position will also open your airway so that your voice will carry better.

Whenever you report to Audio-Reader to record or participate in a live broadcast, please “sign in” in the special notebook located just inside the front door. This procedure is helpful for two reasons: 1) It enables the staff to tell at a glance who is recording. 2) It also provides documentation that volunteer hours are being performed for our service.

**Special Questions of Format**

In addition to good reading and pronunciation techniques, there are miscellaneous aspects of form that must be considered as well.
FOOTNOTES: Footnotes may be read if they appear on the same page with their referent. If they do not appear on the same page, or if their content is more distracting than helpful, they should be omitted.

QUOTATIONS: Quotations should generally be indicated by the inflection of the voice, or by phrases such as “Mr. Weinberger said” or “she said” in the text of the book or article.

EDITORIALIZING: It is unacceptable to offer personal comments regarding the material you are reading. As a volunteer broadcaster, your task is to read the written word as the author has presented it. Please refrain from editorializing so that our listeners remain free to form their own opinions about the material.

CENSORSHIP: Another type of editorializing is censorship. Just because the author’s choice of words may seem offensive to you, under no circumstances should you change or omit words because of your personal values. Again, your task is to read the words as they have been written. If a book or article contains language that you find offensive, you may choose not to read this material.

PICTURES: Pictures and the accompanying captions may enhance a newspaper or book broadcast. Thus, photos and diagrams may be described when it seems appropriate. It may be helpful to write or plan the description so that your commentary sounds smooth and professional.

DEDICATIONS, FOREWORDS, PREFACES, PROLOGUES, ETC.: When you record a book or other material which contains introductory information such as a dedication, foreword, etc., we suggest that you read this material unless it is “dry” and unhelpful, such as an extensive list of acknowledgements. When in doubt, consult a staff member.

BYLINES: Our listeners have commented that they appreciate hearing bylines given in newspaper and magazine articles. Thus, we recommend that you read the name of the writer whenever it is given.

DATELINES: An AP or other news service story is often prefaced by the “dateline,” which simply states the name of the city and/or country from which the article is being reported. While reading the dateline is not mandatory, it is probably a good idea to read it in most cases. Sometimes
the text of the article will make vague references to the dateline, like “the shooting occurred here today,” so it is often helpful to have mentioned the location.

Feedback and Evaluations

As an Audio-Reader volunteer, you will receive feedback from staff on your readings. You will receive comments after your first reading and again after your first three months as a volunteer. All volunteers will receive evaluations once a year, and be asked to complete a self-evaluation periodically. We’ll also spot check and let you know of any concerns as appropriate. If at any time you have a concern about your reading or format for your broadcast, please ask—we are more than happy to take a listen and give you some feedback!
Final Note

We hope you will enjoy your time as an Audio-Reader volunteer. Many of our volunteers have been reading for 5, 10—even 35 years. Your commitment and dedication truly make a difference in the lives of others. The time and talent you give open a window to the outside world. Thanks for taking the time to give.